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Nixon Wanted Other Break-Ins

REUTERS

White House tapes from 1971 show that a year before the Watergate break-in President Richard Nixon ordered his aides to dig up dirt on the Democrats and to commit two break-ins, Newsweek magazine reported yesterday.

The tapes, recorded in the White House in June and July of 1971, revealed Nixon wanted government files ransacked to find anything to smear past Democratic presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to John F. Kennedy, the magazine reported in its Nov. 3 issue, which goes on sale today.

Recorded just after the publication of the Pentagon Papers — the federal government's secret history of the Vietnam War — the tapes showed Nixon wanted a break-in at the National Archives, Newsweek reported.

"We're going to expose, God, Pearl Harbor," Newsweek quoted Nixon as saying on the tapes. It said Nixon apparently believed there were documents that would make Roosevelt look responsible for the success of the Japanese attack on Hawaii.

Nixon was especially interested in finding damaging documents about Kennedy, to whom he narrowly lost the 1960 presidential election.

Newsweek said Nixon was looking for documents about the Bay of Pigs and the brushes with nuclear war concerning Berlin in 1961 and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

The magazine also said Nixon wanted a break-in at the Brookings Institution think-tank as a means of retaliating against Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers to The New York Times. Nixon apparently believed that Ellsberg's actions were being run out of the Brookings Institution.

Newsweek also reported that on Sept. 13, 1971, Nixon ordered chief of staff H.R. Haldeman to have the Internal Revenue Service go after prominent Democratic campaign donors.

"Please get me the names of the Jews," Newsweek quoted Nixon as saying. "You know, the big Jewish contributors of the Democrats."